

# HOME & GARDEN INFORMATION CENTER

## Is it SAFE to Can Chocolate and Fudge Sauces?

Desert topped with chocolate sauce is a treat any time of the year. Chocolate and fudge sauces are fairly easy to make and often yield large servings, making them ideal for preparing and storing for future use. Home canners are always looking for foods that can be canned and made shelf stable but did you know that there are no reliable recipes for home canned chocolate or fudge sauce? That's not to say that recipes aren't available, there are plenty of them on the internet, but they are NOT safe.

Chocolate sauces are low-acid foods. Improper canning of low-acid foods has the potential to allow the spores that cause botulism to grow.

Botulism is a food poisoning. It is caused by a toxin produced by the bacterium, *Clostridium botulinum*. *C. botulinum* and its spores are prevalent in soil and water worldwide. The bacteria and spores themselves are harmless; however, with proper conditions they can create a highly toxic poison that can cause extreme illness and even death. The spores need a low-oxygen, low-acid environment in which to grow and prefer temperatures between 40 °F and 120 °F. The spores are heat tolerant and must be heated to temperatures above 240° to effectively kill them.

Foods that have not been preserved with proper canning procedures have the potential to create an ideal environment for the growth of spores. During the canning process, oxygen is removed from the container creating a low-oxygen environment. Water bath canning is not capable of delivering a high enough temperature to destroy the spores. Therefore, low-acid foods such as chocolate/fudge sauces require pressure canning to become shelf

stable. At this time, the USDA Guide for Home Canning, The National Center for Home Food Preservation and Nationwide Cooperative Extension offices have no tested recipes for pressure canning hot fudge and chocolate sauces.

The good news is that these sauces freeze beautifully. Here's a great recipe for Freezer Chocolate Fudge Sauce. Use within 3 to 4 months for best quality.

### Freezer Chocolate Fudge Sauce

½ cup margarine or butter  
3 squares (3 ounces) unsweetened chocolate  
2 ½ cups sugar  
pinch of salt (optional)  
12 oz. can evaporated milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla

1. Melt margarine in the top of a double boiler.
2. Add chocolate squares; stir constantly until it melts.
3. Gradually add sugar, ¼ cup at a time, while stirring. Add salt, if desired.
4. Gradually stir in milk; add the vanilla.
5. Cook until desired thickness – approximately 1 hour, stirring occasionally.

Pour sauce into a clean, warm, wide-mouth quart jar or similar freezer-safe rigid container(s). Allow the sauce to cool at room temperature for 1 to 2 hours. Seal and freeze.

The sauce should remain soft enough to spoon out portions while frozen.

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